

## **Testimony**

**March 16, 2009**

### **Connecticut Chapter of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials**

#### HB 6375 AN ACT CONCERNING REVIEW AND TERMINATION OF CERTAIN BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Honorable GAE Committee Members,

I submit this testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Chapter of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (Conn-NAHRO). Conn-NAHRO represents over 100 local housing authorities within the State of Connecticut.

The proposed bill includes eliminating the Housing Sustainability Committee. This Committee was the first step in the State's effort to preserve the long neglected 17,000 units of state financed housing. Unlike housing developed by the federal government, these housing developments receive no operating subsidies and no predictable funding for meeting long term capital needs. In 2006 the capital needed to preserve and protect the investment was conservatively placed at \$500 million. The original \$10 million allocated in 2008 was viewed as an initial step in meeting emergency needs. However, the funding was later raided to fund the Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) program to in an effort avoid substantial rent increases to our most vulnerable residents.

The enacting legislation recognized the diversity in the housing portfolio to allow for the fair distribution of any such funds. The makeup of the committee takes into account the size of housing authorities, the interests of those who own and manage the developments, and equally important, the residents that rely on such housing opportunities.

Affordable housing is directly linked to the stabilization of our communities and to State's job market. Eliminating the Housing Sustainability Committee and Fund will effectively abandon the State of Connecticut's commitment to preserving and protecting low and moderate rental apartments. As President of Conn-NAHRO, I urge you to keep the Housing Sustainability Committee and Fund in place.

Sincerely,

Scott C. Bertrand

President, Conn-NAHRO